

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ISLAMA 10803 01 OF 02 141257Z

43

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 AID-20 MC-02 EB-11 TRSE-00

COME-00 OMB-01 DRC-01 EA-11 /194 W

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P 140615Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2480

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 10803

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, PK, US

SUBJECT: AZIZ AHMED ON US ARMS POLICY

1. MY CALLS ON HIGH PAK OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN DELAYED BECAUSE IT IS RULE OF PROTOCOL HERE THAT THE FIRST CALL BE UPON AZIZ AHMED. HE HAS BEEN OUT OF COUNTRY WITH BHUTTO, RETURNING HERE NIGHT BEFORE LAST. HE ASKED THAT I CALL ON HIM YESTERDAY AFTERNOON.

2. AFTER QUITE SHORT CHIT-CHAT, AS I HAD KNOWN HIM WHEN HE WAS AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON, HE ABRUPTLY LAUNCHED INTO A DISCUSSION OF OUR ARMS POLICY IN THE SUB-CONTINENT. I HAD KNOW THIS PROBLEM WOULD ARISE ALMOST IMMEDIATELY, AND THAT I WOULD VERY EARLY ON BE PUT TO A TEST ON THIS ISSUE, BUT HAD NOT KNOWN HE WOULD BE AFFORDED SUCH A CONVENIENT OPENING GAMBIT. AN ARTICLE APPEARED IN THE PRESS HERE YESTERDAY MORNING DATED LINED WASHINGTON, SAYING THAT THE UNITED STATES

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 ISLAMA 10803 01 OF 02 141257Z

HAD AGREED TO RESUME BUILDING THE "PEACE INDIGO"

MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM FOR INDIA, CANCELLED DURING THE DECEMBER 1971 WAR, QUOTING AMERICAN MILITARY AND INDIAN EMBASSY SOURCES IN WASHINGTON. THE ARTICLE BRIEFLY DESCRIBED THE PROJECT AND HAD THE CURIOUS SENTENCE "THE UNITED STATES HAS SINCE LIFTED THE EMBARGO ON ARMS TO PAKISTAN". (AZID AHMED DID NOT MENTION THIS SENTENCE AND WE BELIEVE IT IS JUST BAD REPORTING OR POSSIBLY TYPO ERROR, AND HOPE IT WILL BE RECOGNIZED AS SUCH AND DOES NOT START NEW PRESS SPECULATION.)

3. AZIZ AHMED SAID THAT BHUTTO HAD ASKED HIM TO TAKE THIS UP WITH ME IMMEDIATELY AS THEY VIEWED IT QUITE SERIOUSLY AND WERE SURPRISED NOT TO BE INFORMED BEFORE HEARING ABOUT IT IN THE PRESS. I TOLD HIM QUITE FRANKLY I HAD NEVER HEARD OF THE PROJECT UNTIL I SAW IT IN THE PRESS THIS MORNING AND HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO SEE MY STAFF ON THIS PRIOR TO MEETING WITH HIM, BUT THAT I WOULD GET UP-TO-DATE ON THE BACKGROUND IMMEDIATELY. HE THEN SHOWED ME THE CONTENTS OF A NOTE THAT WE HAD SOME TIME AGO SENT THEM DESCRIBING THIS PROJECT AND SAYING IT WOULD NOT BE RESUMED AS LONG AS WE HAD A POLICY OF TOTAL EMBARGO. I SAID I THEREFORE ASSUMED WE FELT THIS PROJECT WAS PRIMARILY FOR DEFENSIVE PURPOSES, AND THAT IT WOULD LOGICALLY BE RESUMED WITH OUR RECENT PARTIAL LIFT OF THE EMBARGO. AZIZ AHMED ADMITTED THAT OUR NOTE POINTED OUT THAT ONLY ONE OF THE SIX FIXED RADAR STATIONS INVOLVED COULD BE EFFECTIVE OVER PAKISTAN TERRITORY, BUT SAID THEY WERE CONCERNED ABOUT TWO MOBILE UNITS IN THE AREA OF KASHMIR WHICH WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE TIED INTO THE LINK WE WERE CONSTRUCTING. I TOLD HIM I WOULD HAVE TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT ALL THIS BEFORE WE COULD USEFULLY DISCUSS IT. HE AGAIN MADE QUITE A POINT ABOUT NOT KNOWING ABOUT THIS IN ADVANCE.

4. (COMMENT: WHEN I GOT BACK TO THE OFFICE I CHECKED THE FILES AND FOUND WE HAD BRIEFED AZIZ AHMED PRETTY THOROUGHLY ON "PEACE INDIGO" IN DECEMBER 1972 (STATE 221211 AND ISLAMABAD 9714 AND 9934 OF 1972). WE TOLD HIM AT THAT TIME THAT THE PROJECT WAS BLOCKED AS LONG AS WE

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 ISLAMA 10803 01 OF 02 141257Z

KEPT THE TOTAL ARMS EMBARGO ON THE SUB-CONTINENT, BUT WHEN HE SAID HE HAD TO ASSUME IT WOULD BE TAKEN UP AGAIN ONCE THE EMBARGO WAS LIFTED, WE AGREED IT WAS A GOOD ASSUMPTION.)

5. THE ABOVE QUITE NICELY GAVE AZIZ AHMED AN OPENING TO LAUNCH INTO DISCUSSIONS ABOUT OUR CURRENT ARMS POLICY IN GENERAL, SOVIET INTENTIONS IN THE AREA,

INDIA'S MILITARY CAPABILITY, IWER MILITARY BUDGET, HER
INDIGENOUS ABILITY TO PRODUCE MILITARY EQUIPMENT,
DEPLOYMENT OF INDIAN FORCES, AND OF COURSE, SOVIET
MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO INDIA. THERE WAS NOTHING REALLY
NEW IN THIS PRESENTATION AND HAVE DECIDED NOT TO LENGTHEN
THIS PARTICULAR CABLE BY SUMMARIZING IT. ALSO, AZIZ AHMED
TOLD ME THAT HE KNEW BHUTTO WOULD WANT TO PERSONALLY
SPEND QUITE A BIT OF TIME WITH ME ON THIS GENERAL
SUBJECT, AND HE PREDICTED THAT IT WOULD BE JUST AS
SOON AS THE PRIME MINISTER COULD DO SO, POSSIBLY IN
DAY OR SO. (IT MAY BE BEST THAT I AWAIT A COMPLETE
ANALYSIS FOR THE DEPARTMENT, ALTHOUGH I REALIZE THIS
WILL MERELY BE AN UPDATING OF WHAT IS GENERALLY KNOWN.)

6. I ASKED AZIZ AHMED TO TALK FULLY ABOUT THEIR VIEWS
ON THIS PROBLEM, SAYING THAT WHILE I WAS QUITE FAMILIAR
WITH IT, I WANTED TO HEAR ABOUT IT FROM HIM. HIS GENERAL
PITCH WAS THAT IT WAS THEIR UNDERSTANDING THAT THIS WAS
AN "OPEN QUESTION" AS FAR AS WE WERE CONCERNED. HE
TOOK THE STANCE, THEREFORE, THAT THEY WERE WAITING FOR
US TO
MAKE UP OUR MIND AND GIVE THEM THE ANSWER,
HOPING OF COURSE IT COULD BE AFFIRMATIVE AND SOON.

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 10803 02 OF 02 141248Z

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 10803

7. I REVIEWED SOMEWHAT THE DILEMMA THAT THIS PROBLEM GIVES US. I SAID I COULD, I THOUGHT, REFUTE SOME OF HIS POINTS BUT WOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO DO SO AT THIS TIME, ALTHOUGH I HOPED THAT SOON HE COULD FIND THE TIME FOR A REALLY LONG TALK ON ALL ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM. I SAID THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE LOGIC IN SOME OF HIS POINTS, AS I DID NOT WANT TO ATTEMPT FUTILE ARGUMENTATION ON THOSE WHERE THEY DO IN FACT HAVE LOGIC ON THEIR SIDE.

8. BUT I ALSO SAID THAT I HAD STRUGGLED WITH THIS PROBLEM OVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME, INDEED FROM THE TIME OF THE DECISION TO FIRST ASSIST PAKISTAN MILITARILY WHEN I HAD JOE SISCO'S JOB. I SAID SOMETIMES I WAS NOT SURE I WAS WISE ENOUGH TO KNOW THE BEST ANSWER. I THOUGHT, HOWEVER, ONE THING WAS QUITE CLEAR, AND THAT WAS THAT THE "BEST" ANSWER COULD ONLY BE FOUND IN A CONTINUING IMPROVEMENT IN PAKISTAN-INDIAN RELATIONS A LA SIMLA, AND BEYOND. I SAID THAT OUR RELATIONS WITH INDIA, WHICH SEEMED TO BE HOPEFULLY, BUT QUITE SLOWLY,
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SECRET

PAGE 02 ISLAMA 10803 02 OF 02 141248Z

IMPROVING, WERE OF COURSE IMPORTANT TO US, BUT THAT IT SEEMED TO ME THAT THIS WAS BY NO MEANS ALL THAT WAS AT STAKE. IF WE TOOK A COURSE ON THIS ISSUE WHICH RADICALLY WORSENERED OUR RELATIONS WITH INDIA, IT SEEMED TO ME ALMOST AXIOMATIC THAT AS A BACK-LASH PAKISTAN-INDIAN RELATIONS COULD IN THEMSELVES BECOME RADICALLY WORSE. AZIZ AHMED RELUCTANTLY AGREED THAT THIS COULD POSSIBLY TURN OUT TO BE THE CASE. I SAID CERTAINLY THE MOST DISASTROUS THING THAT COULD BE DONE IN THE AREA WOULD BE TO SEE ADDED SOVIET MILITARY SUPPORT TO INDIA AND MATCHING SUPPORT ON OUR PART TO PAKISTAN BUILD UP INTO A LOCAL ARMS RACE. HE ALSO SEEMED TO AGREE THAT THIS WAS CORRECT, AND SUPPORTED MY VIEW AS TO WHAT THIS WOULD DO TO MUCH NEEDED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. IN GENERAL, HOWEVER, HE VOICED A DOUBT THAT INDIA WOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR RELATIONS TO IMPROVE AS RAPIDLY AND TO THE EXTENT WE HOPED, PARTICULARLY WITH THE EXTENT OF SOVIET INFLUENCE THERE.

9. I DID, HOWEVER, GIVE HIM A SYMPATHETIC HEARING, WHILE IN NO WAY IMPLYING THAT I WOULD RECOMMEND ANY CHANGE IN PRESENT POLICY WHICH HE WOULD UNDERSTAND IN ANY EVEN IN VIEW OF MY NEWNESS HERE. HE CAN BE QUITE A HARDLINER, AS READERS OF THIS MESSAGE WILL KNOW, BUT HE KEPT THINGS SOFT AND PLEASANT,

PROBABLY IN PART BECAUSE THIS WAS OUR FIRST SERIOUS DISCUSSION AND HE KNEW I WOULD GET A REPEAT FROM BHUTTO.

10. I HAVE CALLED ON SIX AMBASSADORS SO FAR, AND FIVE OF THEM (SOVIETS THE EXCEPTION) RAISED THIS SUBJECT AT THEIR OWN INITIATIVE SAYING THAT THEY FELT LIFE WOULD BECOME INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT FOR ME HERE OVER THE ARMS SUPPLY ISSUE. SURPRISINGLY, THE JAPANESE (A SERIOUS INTELLECTUAL TYPE) WAS THE MOST EMPHATIC. THE EGYPTIAN, WHO HAS BEEN HERE FIVE YEARS, WAS ALSO EMPHATIC, SURPRISING ME IN A RATHER DETAILED ACCOUNT AS TO HOW MUCH THIS TOPIC WAS A SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION IN THE STREETS AND BAZAARS. THE IRANIAN ECHOED THE SENTIMENTS OF THE SHAH.

11. EVEN THE KNOWLEDGEABLE BRITISH AMBASSADOR SAID
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SECRET

PAGE 03 ISLAMA 10803 02 OF 02 141248Z

THAT IN THEIR MODEST WAY THE BRITISH HAD MADE SOME EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE TO PAKISTAN AND THAT HE ANTICIPATED FURTHER LOOSENING OF THEIR OWN POLICY IN THE COMING YEAR, AS HE HAD FINALLY BEEN ABLE TO CONVINCE LONDON THAT THE TIME HAD COME NOT TO PAY TOO MUCH ATTENTION TO OVER-REACTION IN DELHI. HE STATED THAT HE THOUGHT THINGS WOULD TURN OUT BEST IF WE COULD MOVE SOMEWHAT FURTHER FORWARD OURSELVES.

12. I TOLD HIM THAT SOME OF THE LOGIC OF THE INDIAN REACTION ESCAPED ME. THE INDIANS DIDN'T SEEM TO RAISE MUCH FUSS IF THE FRENCH OR OTHERS AIDED PAKISTAN MILITARILY, BUT THEY WENT COMPLETELY EMOTIONAL OVER ANY EFFORT WE MIGHT MAKE. HE SAID THAT THERE WAS A VERY SIMPLE ANSWER: THE INDIANS KNEW THAT FRANCE WAS INTERESTED IN THIS GAME FOR PRIMARILY COMMERCIAL REASONS, AND THAT THE FRENCH WOULD NOT PAY MUCH ATTENTION TO THEIR OBJECTIONS, SO WHY TRY. HE SAID THE INDIANS FELT MORE SURELY THAT THEY COULD INFLUENCE THE ATTITUDE OF THE U.S., PARTICULARLY OF OUR CONGRESS SO THEY KEPT THE EMOTIONAL ISSUE ALIVE PRIMARILY WITH US.

13. SO FAR I HAVE ONLY ACKNOWLEDGED TO OTHER AMBASSADORS MY AWARENESS OF THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM, AND OF OUR HOPE THAT THE BEST SECURITY FOR THE AREA MIGHT COME THROUGH INCREASINGLY GOOD PAKISTAN-INDIA RELATIONS. I CONTINUE, OF COURSE, TO HAVE A FERVENT HOPE THAT AN ENTIRELY NEW ELEMENT IS NOT INJECTED INTO THIS PROBLEM ALONG THE LINES OF RECENT REPORTS FROM KABUL.
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